

Evaluation of a medication use review service in Swiss community pharmacies: “Médicaments à Jour?”

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Background: In Switzerland, no medication review is currently recognized or remunerated in community pharmacies (CP). In March 2023, a new (type 2A intermediate) medication review, including a review of brought medication boxes, called Médicaments à jour? (MàJ?), was locally introduced to identify drug-related problems (DRPs) associated with patients' home medication management, including self-medication.

Objective: To describe the efficiency of MàJ? in detecting and managing DRPs and unused medication, as well as barriers and facilitators perceived by the CP.

Methods: A pre-post intervention study is being undertaken in CPs. Pharmacists are recruiting randomly selected patients (adults on at least four prescription drugs taken over three months). Patients receive three structured consultations at 6-months intervals. Pharmacists are contacted after one, three and six months to evaluate the barriers and facilitators they experienced. The primary outcome is identifying and managing DRPs (documented with PharmDISC tool). Secondary outcomes include patients' medication knowledge (assessed with seven questions on a scale of -7 to 7), the number of expired or ceased prescribed medications, the description of pharmaceutical interventions and the facilitators and barriers to implementation.

Findings: Nine pharmacies included 29 patients, of which 13 received the three structured consultations. Forty-one DRPs appeared at T0, eight at T6, and one at T12, affecting respectively 48% (n=14), 19% (n=3), and 8% (n=1) of patients. Overall, pharmaceutical interventions decreased from 88 at T0 to 8 at T6 and 1 at T12. Medication knowledge increased by 0.4 ± 1.2 between T0 and T6, and by 1.1 ± 1.3 between T6 and T12. At T0, patients brought 344 medication boxes, from which 88 were eliminated based on pharmacists' recommendations. At T6 and T12, patients brought 112 and 83 boxes, respectively, with none discarded after pharmacist consultations. Most pharmacists had at least one preoccupation regarding MàJ? (10/20 at 1-month, 9/15 at 3-months and 6/15 at 6-months), mostly with “patients' interest” and “time constraint”. Facilitators mentioned in the 6-month questionnaire were the “therapeutic relationship” with the patient and being “convinced by the added-value of MàJ?”. Pharmacists considered the service to be of medium complexity (13/20 at 1-month, 11/15 at 3-months and 6/15 at 6-months).

Conclusions: Most patients encountered DRPs that often required several pharmaceutical interventions. These interventions were efficient to reduce DRPs, to sort out patients' medications and to increase their medication knowledge at T6 and T12. However, CP rarely implemented the service, possibly due to time constraints and patient-related factors.

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Community pharmacists' readiness to provide counseling on food supplements –a systematic review

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Background: Food supplements are frequently used by the public and are widely sold in pharmacies, making community pharmacists the most accessible healthcare professionals who could provide information to patients about them. Pharmacists are ideally positioned to help patients make informed decisions regarding the use of food supplements by knowing what questions to ask and providing appropriate consultation. Pharmacists' knowledge of food supplements is critical to the implementing pharmaceutical care, including proper intake, awareness of side effects, and possible interactions with other medications.

Purpose: This study aimed to evaluate the scientific evidence regarding community pharmacists' level of knowledge regarding food supplements and their attitudes toward dispensing and providing counselling to consumers.

Method: A literature review was carried out through the scientific databases PubMed, Scopus, and Web of Science using the following keywords: (“food supplements” OR dietary supplements”) AND (“pharmacists' knowledge”) AND (“pharmacists' attitudes”). The inclusion criteria were full-text peer-reviewed articles written in English that investigated community pharmacists' knowledge and attitudes regarding food supplements were included in the analysis. Only studies published between January 2000 and October 2024 were included.

Findings: Using the search strategy a total of 738 articles were identified from the electronic databases, of which 22 met the inclusion criteria. Most studies were conducted in Asia (Saudi Arabia, Palestine, India, Jordan, Iran, Malaysia, Iraq, and the United Arab Emirates) compared to fewer in Europe (Italy, Croatia, and Poland), North America (Canada and USA), Australia and Africa (Nigeria). The analyzed studies showed that the community pharmacists' knowledge regarding food supplements is unsatisfactory, and efforts should be made to improve the counselling process.

Conclusion: Community pharmacists could play an essential role in advising patients on the safe and appropriate use of food supplements but their attitudes toward this responsibility remain insufficiently explored in the scientific literature.

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Point-of-care testing in European community pharmacies: A systematic review

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Background: Increasing access to healthcare has been the main goal in improving public health services for the last few years. One approach is to implement rapid diagnostic testing (RDT) such as point-of-care (POC) tests in community pharmacies. Pharmacists with their knowledge, skills and accessibility can provide timely diagnostic services for several conditions including COVID-19, influenza, and streptococcal infections.

Purpose: This study aims to evaluate the impact of pharmacist-led POC testing in European community pharmacies. An additional objective is to compare the regulatory opportunities and limitations for these activities in Bulgaria and to compare them with those in other European countries.

Method: A systematic literature review was performed using predefined keywords - “point-of-care testing”, “community pharmacy”, “pharmacist” and “pharmaceutical care”, across the PubMed, Scopus and Web of Science databases. Only original, full-text articles written in English and conducted in Europe that investigated the role of pharmacists in performing POC testing in community pharmacies were included. Published data from January 2004 to October 2024 was considered for inclusion. Furthermore, a content analysis was performed on the FIP global intelligence report regarding the requirements for the implementation of POC testing in community pharmacies and the impact on general practitioners' workloads.

Findings: A total of 430 articles were retrieved from electronic databases, of which 25 met the inclusion criteria. Several POC tests were identified as the most